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SYNOPSIS. The narrator, Hall, of the story is making a cruise among the islands of the eastern Archipelago on a trading boat. She is located in Hilo Bay, Tom Madison, the supercargo, is familiar with the history of the islands, and tells a story of how, in 1582, a Spanish galleon, laden with gold, was said to have been wrecked on a rock in the bay. The natives, finding gold in the clear water as they drift ashore, when he sees a form that resembles a ship at the bottom of the bay, he tells Madison, who asks the captain to cast anchor, without telling him why. Under pretext of examining the coral reef, Hall determines to go down in a diving suit to the bottom of the bay. The treasure object he has seen, the plan is carried out. After spending some time among the coral, he finds the object of his search. It is a Spanish ship, and after some effort he climbs upon the deck and drops into the hold.

PART III.

It had been deeper than I looked for, at least I felt as if it were. When I reached the bottom, the deck which I had left was quite out of reach and seemed to be several feet above my head. I had alighted on one of the shapeless looking beams I had noticed from above, and I was surprised to find that in spite of its covering of shells and seaweed it felt nearly level to the touch. I looked around, and I was conscious of a strange, new feeling of oppression. For the first time since I left the brig, I felt a faint, sickening sensation that was almost like fear. It may have been the sudden change from the broad freedom of the ocean bottom to the narrow limits of the place in which I found myself; it may even have been merely the effect of the dim, shadowy light in which I stood and the darker shadows that surrounded me on every side; but whatever the cause, the effect was something worse than unpleasant. I looked around, and as I looked I wondered.

It was only by an effort that I recovered myself, and considered what my next step should be. The question was, where I should be most likely to find what I was looking for. There had been no effort required, when at a distance, to pierce the darkness of the treasure lying ready to my hands, but it was different now that I was face to face with realities. I might indeed be standing upon a heap of gold or silver, but now that I found myself in contact with it the reality of the whole thing seemed hard to grasp. I stood and struck several blows with the tomahawk upon the beam on which I was standing. Whatever the heap was composed of, it resisted the edge of my weapon as if it had been stone. I stopped to consider the matter, and was to be gained by merely blunting the edge of the tomahawk unless there was a reasonable chance that I should find what I was looking for. But was it likely? The heap might have consisted of wooden cases, handboxes, or some way by the action of the sea water during the centuries. Even if it were so, was the treasure likely to be stored in this part of the ship? I looked around me again, and the answer seemed clear enough. It was not. Where I stood must have been nearly amidships; surely the most valuable part of the ship that was carried would have been placed under the poop deck near the stern. The heap sloped downward towards the stern, so much so that the water looked dark and cavernous as I stepped forward to peer into the shadows that brooded over it. There did not appear to be any obstacle in my way, however, and after a momentary hesitation I moved cautiously down the slope. I was doubtful of my footing and moved carefully. Step by step, with my face set towards the darker shadows that lurked under the after deck—step by step I felt my way. It was less dark than I feared it would be. My eyes had grown accustomed to the soft, pervading light that came downward through the watery atmosphere, and now I found that they quickly accommodated themselves to the dimmer light that stole obliquely into the inner recesses of the after hold. Looking from side to side as I went, I stepped forward I could make out my new surroundings almost as well as I had done outside. The place was like a cavern, and step by step as I descended, the illusion became more complete. Under my feet the floor seemed to stretch out, thickly paved with shells; on each side coral plants had taken root, and although they had not attained the size and luxuriance of those outside, they seemed almost more strange and beautiful as they stretched their colored branches towards me on every side; overhead long tresses of colored seaweed hung downward in disheveled

masses and swayed softly in the current, made by my progress. I had decided that under the poop deck was the most likely place to find what I was looking for. The most precious part of that ill-fated cargo—so I argued with myself—would be placed where it would be most immediately under the eyes of the officers who, no doubt, were quartered on the poop, and I was anxious to get something undeniably precious, gold if possible, to take back with me. My eyes searched the place as I went for signs of gold. Silver, I supposed, might be there, but gold would be proof against decay; if it were not hidden in cases, I should see it even in that dim light. And who that sees it can be mistaken in gold?

The hold was larger than I had thought. Little by little as I went on the light grew dimmer. The shadow of the coral shrubs began to look ghastly, and the waving seaweeds overhead more and more suggested medusa faces half hidden behind these tangled tresses. I must surely be near the place where the treasure had been stored, and it was worth while to take a few steps more even though they led into those eerie shadows. I seemed to be all eyes. My glances peered into each darker hollow in search of the yellow gleam of gold, and in half-conscious dread of some unknown terror about to show itself in the shadow.

I had nearly reached the stern, at last, for already I could dimly make out the double door that marked the end before me. If the treasure were not here my attempt had failed. Perhaps after all the story of the treasure had been false. Perhaps it had been taken by the crew, and the blind of the native catch had been put in place to cover the robbery. I grew cold at the thought, but yet I didn't stop. I would at least make sure, now that I had come so far. I took another step. No, it wasn't the stern after all. The shadow I had seen from something that was piled up higher than my head, but it didn't reach to the black covering overhead which I knew to be the deck. I looked at it narrowly; I touched it with my hand; I struck it with the tomahawk. In closed as was in my helmet I could catch the slight of the beam of light. I struck again and again. Then something gave way, and out of the darkness there rolled something that fell in a stream into the darker shadows at my feet. Dim as the light was, I seemed to catch the glint of gold, and as I was to all other sounds, I seemed to hear the chink of metal as the little stream ran swiftly down into the darkness. I had found the treasure!

The revelation of feeling was almost too much for me. I felt myself stagger for a moment and I dropped the tomahawk at my feet. Then my senses came back to me with a wild throbbing excitement. For a moment bright visions, indefinite but splendid, floated before my eyes and seemed to dazzle me by their vague beauty. I vaguely perceived the right full owner of the great treasure. What might it be? What might I not do with it? It doesn't take long to dream, and I dreamed many things in that minute's space. And all the time that I was dreaming gold was running out and gleaming faintly at my feet. Then I came to myself and bent forward to grasp it in my outstretched hands. As I did something like a narrow shadow seemed to flit past me, and even as I bent forward I felt myself arrested by some force that forced me to halt firm, soft, but for the moment almost irresistible.

My heart seemed to stand still, and for several moments I felt powerless even to make an effort to free myself from that mysterious grasp. What it could be that held me I could not even guess. I vaguely perceived to myself the bony fingers of some Spanish don who for three long centuries had stood guard over the sunken treasure. I am not an imaginative man, however, and as my heart recovered itself and the blood began to rush through my veins, my courage came back to me. It might be only a fancy. With the thought came the effort to prove it correct, and I threw myself forward once more to grasp the falling gold. Again I found myself held back, and now I knew that the grasp was on my shoulder. Surely it was a hand. The weight with which I had thrown myself forward, resisted as it was, swung me partly round, and in the dim twilight my eyes caught sight of a thin, dark line that stretched out of the darkness rigid and strong. Was it the skeleton arm I had dreamed of? Involuntarily my hand went up and caught it. No, it was no bony substance on which my gauntlet closed so convulsively, for it was a hand against it that bent like a piece of highly tempered steel. With a sudden wrench I tried to loosen its hold and I almost succeeded. Then, with a kind of shudder that communicated itself to my hand, it suddenly relaxed and grew firm again, and I felt as if I had been drawn closer to the spot in the darkness out of which it came. At the same moment something else sprang out of the shadow, trembled for an instant as if in doubt, and then darted suddenly at my other shoulder. Then I knew what it was that I had to deal with—a devil fish.

Strange as it may seem—strange as it even seems to myself now—the conviction was a positive relief. I had never seen a devil fish, it is true, but I had heard and read of them, and their appearance was familiar to me from pictures. Terrible as the creature was, he was not invested with the terrors of the unknown, and I felt as if I could face him on very different terms from the bony skeleton I had imagined to myself at that moment of dread. Like a flash it passed through my mind as I felt the new arm of the animal touch and cling to my breast. There was something about that touch that was unlike any other experience I had ever had. It was not a blow; it was not a grasp; it wasn't even a push—yet the sensation I felt was a little like all three. I staggered for a moment, but I held fast by the long, thin arm which I had gripped so lightly with my hand, and it seemed to steady me. It was something to feel even so much that was real and tangible; but for these two slender bands that reached out of the darkness I was opposed to the unseen.

I felt that I was face to face with the enemy, and even that was some-

thing. The arms had sprung out of the shadow, and I knew that they were more behind. When would they, were they really had more than a faint curiosity about the coins, and they no longer connected themselves with my finger. As I looked, I moved my foot, fell off—the tomahawk. The excellent something that rested against it, it brought me back from the half-conscious state into which I was falling. I was not quite defenseless, then, after all. I stopped to seize it, and at the same moment another slender hand darted at me from the darkness, and clutched me by the arm. It held me, yet it did not paralyze as the others had done. I had grown accustomed to the idea, which was much, and I now had a gleam of hope, which was still more. I bent forward and down—wards in search of the yellow gleam of gold, and as my fingers closed clumsily on the handle, I felt as if I was suddenly restored to my self-confidence once more.

I rose to face my unseen adversary, and I was surprised to feel myself so cool and prepared. I had always heard that men were quickly exhausted in the coils of the devil fish, and for a few moments I failed to understand why I could be so calm. I was in the right, and it dawned upon me, it was my diving suit that preserved me so far. The creature had seized me indeed, but his suckers were fixed only on the thick leather suit that covered me from head to foot. Even through that strong protection I could not feel the force of its deadly suction, for my flesh seemed to expand and rise to meet the grip of these leathery looking bands, but it was with a new hope that I recognized the fact that most of their deadly power was wasted on the air. I was in the right, and that group, the struggle might not after all be a hopeless one. The very thought was half the battle gained.

My assailant was in no hurry. Second after second passed, and they seemed more and more impatient, yet he made no further movement. I followed these deadly arms to the place they came from; I gazed into the darkness in the hope of seeing some vulnerable point at which to strike. More than once I tried to strike the right one on the long, sinewy hands that grasped me, but it was vain—I could make no impression. Then another stole out of the darkness and alighted on my thigh. "Four!" I said to myself, as I eyed the snaky limbs—a darker shadow in the gloom. I was in the right, and I felt a grim pleasure in the thought that my armor was all the time despoiling the devil fish. He was waiting till I should be helpless in his grip. Well, I also could wait!

At last he was satisfied that his time had come. Suddenly at the same moment two more dark shadows flickered like fangs of fire, and passed before my dazzled eyes, and I felt them alight, one on my leg and the other on my arm. I staggered forward with the weight that was cast upon me so suddenly. At last I could see him, glittering with a faint phosphorescent light in the darkness overhead, but I knew that at last I had him face to face. What was he like? Even now I can give myself no certain answer to that question. There was something like a head, and yet it was not a head, something that resembled a beak, and yet was unlike any beak I had ever seen. The eyes—only the eyes—were recognizable as like, and even these were unlike anything I had known. I could feel each one of the hands he had thrown out of the darkness, with a convulsive pressure as it came. I could feel each of its hundreds of suckers pull and strain till they dragged my flesh into burning ridges under my covering of leather. He was close to me now, and he seemed to gather himself together for a final effort. His head, my eyes seemed to fix and paralyze myself till I could only gaze and gaze into them—a strange creeping numbness coming over me as I did so.

At that moment I felt a sudden pull at my waist, and I was jerked and some one had pulled the rope. In a moment life and consciousness seemed to come back to me and I was myself again. Like a flash I had gripped the tomahawk more firmly in the hand that was least encumbered and struck at the demon's eye with my shoulder. They seemed to flash a lurid fire at me as I did so, but the edge sank deep. Again and yet again I struck in the frenzy of my recovered hold on life. There was a terrible convulsion in which each hand was determined to bound me took a share. I felt myself dragged and tossed, and wrenched, till at last I lost my balance and fell.

When I recovered the consciousness which I must have lost, it seemed to me like a dream. I lay on the deck of the boat, and Tom, who had been on my knee beside me while the skipper's face beamed on me from the background. My helmet had been taken off, and my hot sun was shining full on my face. I struggled into a sitting position and stared round me stupidly for a moment, then Tom's voice said: "Well, Hall, that was a pretty narrow squeak, wasn't it? We've been here, something for finding you." I looked round. The devil fish lay beside me; one of his arms was fastened upon me still. A minute or two passed before I could realize what had happened. Even that ghastly-looking object, with its livid arms and mangled, shapeless body and head, and Tom's kind face on my knee beside me while the skipper's face beamed on me from the background, and played on the deck, seemed for the moment hardly more substantial than a dream. After a few moments I put out my hand and touched it, and with the touch it came back to me. "That's Tom," I exclaimed, eagerly, looking into Madison's face, "surely the native brought up some of the gold with him."

from one to the other, and then my eye rested on the black, which seemed to be the one referred to as Tom by Madison. "Did the skipper tell you where he found me?" I asked, looking at Tom. "No, Bora isn't communicative, and it was just about all he could do to speak at all by the time he got you. But where you think the water?" "In the hold of the Spanish galleon, to be sure," I said, promptly, "within a couple of feet of the treasure."

"The devil you were!" exclaimed Tom. In a startled tone. "Look here, Tom," said, as I proceeded to get up, "if it hadn't been for that brute of a fish, I'd have brought gold enough on board with me to convince all hands, and as it is I'm going back to rest!"

Tom's look puzzled, as if he hardly knew what to think, but there was no hesitation about the captain's jolly visage as he exclaimed: "Not you, my hearty! That thundering devil fish has got into your head, but you'll be all right all right in an hour or two's snooze." I put my hand on Tom's shoulder, "Come on below, old man," I said, "and I'll tell you all about it."

The skipper nodded to Madison "That's talked," he said, "get him to be down for a bit, till he gets over it. Mr. Madison, I should like to hear about it myself, only I've got to go ashore again now. Keep the yarn till I come back, Mr. Hall; you'll tell it all to me for a sleep." "Now, what's the name, Madison?" I asked, as we sat half an hour later on opposite sides of the table in the little saloon of the brig. "You're dead sure there was no mistake, Hall," he said, "it was coin you were thinking of, wasn't it?" "Sure," I ejaculated, with contempt. "Should I want to go back again for fun, do you suppose?" "Well," he said, after thinking for half a minute, "there's only one way that I can think of you'll have to get down again. I'll go myself in a morning, old man, but the chances are I shouldn't find it."

I jumped up and gripped Tom by the hand as I exclaimed: "That's what I say, but how are we going to manage it? They'll try to stop us from going." "The skipper would, sure enough," said Tom, with a laugh, "but I can manage the others while he's gone ashore. I'll go and talk to the mate now while you get into the tugs again. I'll have to offer him a share, though, if he'll accept."

"Oh," I said, "of course we'll all share, Tom. There'll be something for everybody, if we can once get it up." Ten minutes later I went on deck ready to face it again, and the moment I looked at the mate, I saw that Tom had been as good as his word. There was more curiosity than ever in the glances they cast at me, but there was a look of suppressed eagerness about the mate's face that convinced me he would forward my enterprise by every means in his power. "Look here, sir," he said, coming up to me, "de ye think ye could pilot us somewhere near the spot? Mr. Madison tells me ye saw it from the deck, and I could feel sure as there were no mistake afore ye went down."

The idea seemed a good one, and in less than five minutes we were in the boat, two sailors rowing, and the mate and Tom peering over the gunwale on each side, and my head to the stern. We rowed some little distance, and then I made them turn and come back, but as yet we had seen nothing. Surely we were close to the brig now, I thought, and yet we seemed to have taken the right track, too. I stooped over the side and gazed into the glassy depths, and even as I did so a shadow seemed to rise from the bottom. I grasped the gunwale and stared into the water. Yes; there it was again, the same shapeless yet suggestive rock I had looked at from the brig.

"Stop rowing!" I shouted, "back water, men!" In another minute we lay perfectly motionless. In my surprise not more than thirty yards from the spot, the mate gazed downward for some seconds without speaking, and then the latter looked up. "Well, I'll be flattered," he exclaimed, "if I don't believe as it is a ship after all."

I put on the helmet which lay on the seat beside me, and Tom saw to the fastenings. I motioned to the men to pull a stroke and then to stop. Tom saw that the seat was clear and the hands on the helm were ready, and in another instant I had lowered myself over the stern. Tom put a large butcher's knife into my hands and nodded. Then I let go. We had judged our distance well, for when I felt my feet touch the bottom, and looked around I found that I was standing once more on the long deck of the Spanish galleon. A step or two and I had reached the edge of the hold, and in another moment I had dropped into the hold.

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thing the touch of which seemed familiar even though the leather—it was gold.

For not sure how I got back to the daylight. I pushed the signal rope as agreed, and still in the same state of unnatural excitement I found myself hoisted through the water to the side of the brig. The boat was there before me, and the first things I saw, as my eyes recovered from the dazzled feeling with which they confronted the white sunlight, were the eagerly started faces of Tom, the mate and the sailors. The mate grasped me by the arm, and he and Tom handed me on board the boat, and then, for the first time, I opened my hands and let the flashing sunlight glitter on the quaint gold coins that had lain so long amidst the coral beds of the bay.

As I had anticipated, the evidence of the gold was irresistible. We moved the brig to the spot, and the task of getting up the treasure proved less laborious than might have been expected. For my own part I didn't go down again. Now that the excitement was at an end I found that the strain had told upon me more than I had any idea of at the time. I was, however, the hero of the party without a rival from that day forward, and I confess the part I felt my gauntlet close upon some situation was a pleasant one, as I lay on an extemporized couch under the awning and watched bag after bag of yellow gold deposited on the deck beside me as it was hoisted out of the hold of the Spanish galleon, where it had been guarded so long and so well by the great devil fish of Hilo Bay.

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